

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON


March 20, 1952

Memorandum for: MR. WALTER B. SMITH
Director, Central Intelligence
Agency

Attached is the latest draft of the proposed message from the President to the Congress on special programs of immigration and aid to refugees from communism. The Central Intelligence Agency has already reviewed and commented upon earlier drafts. Attached also is a memorandum from Assistant Secretary of State Hickerson--which the Secretary has transmitted to the President--raising certain policy questions concerning the proposed message.

I have been asked, on the President's behalf, to obtain the views of the Agency on the position taken by the Department of State in the Assistant Secretary's memorandum, together with any other comments on the proposed message which you may care to make at this time.

I would very much appreciate a reply to this inquiry in writing by 10:00 a.m. tomorrow at the latest, so that your views can be transmitted promptly to Key West.


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Special Assistant

DRAFT 3/20/52

TO THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES:

One of the gravest problems arising from the present world crisis is created by the overpopulation in parts of Western Europe, aggravated by the flight and expulsion of people from the oppressed countries of Eastern Europe.

This problem is of great practical importance to us because it affects the peace and security of the free world. It is also of great concern to us, because of our long-established humanitarian traditions. The Congress has recognized the importance of this problem and has already enacted some legislation to help meet it. I ask the Congress to give early and favorable consideration to additional legislation to make more adequate provision for meeting this situation.

Specifically, I ask the Congress to authorize a program that will:

- (1) Provide aid for the unfortunate victims of oppression who are escaping from communist tyranny behind the Iron Curtain,
- (2) Continue our participation in the international effort now being made to assist in the migration and resettlement throughout the world of a substantial number of persons from the overpopulated areas of Western Europe, and

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(3) Authorize additional immigration into this country, on a limited and temporary basis, to aid in alleviating the problems created by communist tyranny and overpopulation in Western Europe.

The solution to these problems cannot, and should not, be the responsibility of any one nation. It is an international responsibility -- an integral part of the world crisis which the free nations must meet together. It demands the cooperative efforts of all interested countries. But a real solution can be found only if the United States does its part. We have done our part in the past, and we cannot afford to falter now.

World War II left in its wake a tremendous upheaval of population in the countries of Europe. To meet the situation, this country took the lead in establishing the International Refugee Organization, which provided care and protection for displaced persons and made possible the migration of more than one million of them to 48 countries throughout the free world.

As our own contribution to the common effort, the Congress in 1948 enacted the Displaced Persons Act and subsequently amended and extended it. Both the Congress and the American people have every right to be proud of the achievements made under this farsighted humanitarian legislation.

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The Displaced Persons Act is now approaching the termination date fixed by the Congress. When operations under this law have been finished, almost 400,000 victims of tyranny will have been resettled in the United States. The first major phase of the program was completed with the issuance of practically all of the 341,000 visas authorized to be issued by midnight, December 31, 1951. In addition, the Congress authorized the admission of 54,744 Germans who had fled or been driven from areas east of the Iron Curtain. There is every likelihood that the remaining visas for these German expellees will be issued ahead of the June 30, 1952, deadline set by the Congress.

The job has been well done by the Displaced Persons Commission and other cooperating agencies of the Government. Much of the success of the program is due to the vital work accomplished by private voluntary agencies, representing our major religious faiths and nationality groups, and by the State Commissions appointed by the Governors of 34 States. These organizations of citizens have contributed their efforts and resources to resettling the greater part of the displaced persons admitted to this country. Without them, and without the goodwill and cooperative response of thousands of American families and church groups, this great program could never have been carried out.

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Thus, by doing our own share and by acting together with the other countries of the free world, we have been dealing successfully with the major dislocations caused by Hitler's brutality and aggression.

But the movement of large masses of distressed people across international boundaries is by no means over. Communist tyranny has taken up where Hitler's brutality left off. We are, therefore, now turning our attention to the innocent and unhappy victims of communist oppression.

Throughout the Soviet dominated area of central and eastern Europe, the communist regimes are increasing their repressive measures. Some of the enslaved people are managing to escape to the West. Some fifteen to twenty thousand Germans are slipping over the border from the Soviet Zone of Germany and crossing into Western Germany each month. From the communist countries to the south and east the movement to free Europe is much smaller, but still they come, at the risk of their lives, past border guards and through mine fields. There are about 10,000 of these people already living west of the Iron Curtain and they are coming in at the rate of about 1,000 per month.

The people in all these groups come into areas where, for the most part, the local economy is unable to support the population already

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there. Western Germany, for example, is overcrowded with some nine million people of German ethnic origin who were driven there from Eastern Europe after the war. Trieste, which is receiving many of those escaping from the satellites, is badly overcrowded. Italy is struggling with very serious problems of overpopulation and is urgently trying to resettle large numbers of its people overseas. Greece faces great difficulty in absorbing the refugees of Greek origin who are being driven out of the Balkan satellites by the communists. Thus, the brutal policies of Soviet tyranny are aggravating overcrowded conditions which are already a danger to the stability of these free nations.

This, in general terms, is the nature of the problem that now confronts free Europe.

The Congress is aware of the importance of this problem for the free world and the security of the United States. Congressional enactments and appropriations recently enabled the United States to take the lead in establishing the Provisional Inter-Governmental Committee for the Movement of Migrants from Europe, which 17 governments have already joined. This organization is already at work providing overseas transportation for migrants from areas of overpopulation to lands where more people are needed.

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We are taking part in the work of this organization and have contributed ten million dollars to its operation. The organization has taken over the fleet of ships formerly operated by the International Refugee Organization.

The legal authority to participate in this organization is contained in the Mutual Security Act of 1951. This authority should be extended, and the Congress should make provision for continuing our financial contribution to this work for the next fiscal year.

This is of great importance, but much more needs to be done.

In the first place, specific aid and assistance should be provided for the people who are fleeing at the risk of their lives from Southern and Eastern Europe. These people are Balts, Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, Hungarians, Rumanians, Albanians, Bulgarians, Ukrainians, and Russians.

These people face a desperate situation. Not only do they arrive destitute, with only what they can carry on their backs, but they find themselves in totally strange lands among strange peoples speaking strange languages. The local authorities do not have adequate resources to care for them properly. These people need better care when they first arrive and they need assistance if they are to move on and resettle elsewhere.

The miserable conditions in which these fugitives from communism find themselves, and their present inability to emigrate to new homes and

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start new lives, lead inevitably to despair. Their disillusionment is being effectively exploited by communist propaganda. These men and women are friends of freedom. They include able and courageous fighters against communism. They ask only for an opportunity to play a useful role in the fight for freedom. It is the responsibility of the free world to afford them this opportunity.

The need is well recognized, both in Europe and in this country. Private welfare organizations of American citizens, Protestant, Catholic and Jewish, have been working hard to help these people. Last year these organizations spent substantial amounts for their care and resettlement. These organizations will continue their efforts this year. But the need is greater than they can handle.

First of all, these fugitives from communism need supplemental care and maintenance after they arrive in Western Europe. Local governments and private relief organizations give a minimum amount of this type of aid, but their resources are inadequate. Additional food, better shelter, clothing, medical care, legal advice and other kinds of material assistance are needed.

These people also need assistance in financing overseas transportation. The new international migration organization and the American private relief agencies can and do help with this, but a concerted effort

is needed to give these people an equal opportunity to share in the migration program. At present, because of inadequate resources, it is these fugitives from communism who have the greatest difficulty in arranging for overseas migration. If funds were provided, and an adequate administrative organization set up, these people would have a better chance to migrate.

I am convinced that we must help these people. Therefore, acting under the authority of the Mutual Security Act of 1951, I am authorizing the Director for Mutual Security to go forward with a limited program of assistance in this fiscal year. This program will help alleviate the condition of these people in the countries to which they escaped and will enable many of them to move out of Europe. The funds that are being made available will supplement -- but not in any sense supersede -- the efforts now being made both by the governments of the countries where these people have sought refuge and by private American organizations.

Overseas migration and supplemental care do not, however, constitute all that should be done for those who escape from Eastern Europe. A substantial number of them want to stay in Europe and should have the chance to do so. They want to keep alive in exile the national traditions and culture of their homelands. They should be welcomed in Western Europe and given an opportunity to make their individual contributions to the free world. Many of them will need further education or training so they can prepare themselves for useful and productive work in the North Atlantic Community.

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I urge the Congress, therefore, to provide clear and adequate authority for the coming fiscal year -- together with the necessary funds -- so that the program of assistance we are now starting for the refugees from communism can be carried forward and strengthened along the lines that I have mentioned here.

In addition to these types of aid, the opportunity for military service may provide an answer to the problems of a small number of these refugees. Some of these people will be able to enlist in the United States armed forces overseas, under Public Law 597, the so-called Lodge Act of 1950.

So far, however, only a handful have been allowed to do this because of the

necessary physical and mental requirements for enlistment. Furthermore,

security screening requirements have necessarily been high, since each person

under the provisions of the Lodge Act is a potential United States citizen.

Another type of military service for these people is authorized under sec-

tion 101(A)(1) of the Mutual Security Act of 1951, which provides that they

can be formed into elements of the military forces supporting the North

Atlantic Treaty Organisation. The formation of such units presents great

administrative and political difficulties, but it has been receiving careful

study. Even if it proves possible, however, to create such units, military

service could utilize only a relatively small number of these people and would

not eliminate the need for measures to utilize their skills and energies in

civilian life.

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Such, in brief, are the measures that can help to alleviate the problems of these fugitives from Soviet terror. But these problems, important as they are, are overshadowed by the need for increasing migration from the overcrowded areas of Europe.

Overpopulation is one of the major factors preventing the fullest recovery of those countries where it exists. It is a serious drag on the economies of nations belonging to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. A solution to this problem, therefore, becomes vitally necessary to strengthen the defense of the North Atlantic Community.

Our common defense requires that we make the best possible use not only of the material resources of the free world but of our human resources as well. Men and women who cannot be productively employed in the free countries of Europe because of conditions there are a net loss to the strength of the free world. In other countries, where they are needed, these same people could add to the output and growing power of the free nations. But left in idleness as they now are, wanted and hopeless, they become an easy prey to the demagogues of totalitarianism, both right and left.

The bulk of the emigration needed will have to be taken care of by countries other than the United States. Some of the free nations,

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particularly those with large unsettled areas of undeveloped resources, have a pressing need for large numbers of immigrants to build up their countries and increase their production. Canada and Australia, for example, have already initiated substantial programs of immigration. The Australian immigration program calls for an annual immigration of at least 150,000 persons per year. Canadian absorption in the last year was at the rate of 180,000. Additional opportunities for migrants are opening up, although more slowly, in the Republics of Central and South America.

But the United States can and should take some of the migrants now available in Europe. One of the reasons we lead the free world today is that we are a nation of immigrants. We have been made strong and vigorous by the diverse skills and abilities of the different people who have migrated to this country and become American citizens. Past immigration has helped to build our tremendous industrial power. Today, our growing economy can make effective use of additional manpower in various areas and lines of work.

The rapid expansion of our industry and the enlargement of our defense forces, have increased the demands on our available manpower reserves. Our industry can readily absorb a limited number of skilled and trained personnel in the years immediately ahead.

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In our agriculture particularly, we have a need for additional people. Farm operators and farm workers are essential in our defense effort. Since 1949, there has again been a downward trend in the farm population of the United States. With the resumption of the movement from the farms to the cities, there is a real danger that in the years just ahead our agricultural production may be seriously hampered.

A rich pool of surplus farmers and farm workers exists in the overpopulated areas of Western Europe. Among the expellees in Western Germany there are many agricultural families with no opportunity for employment on the land. In Italy and the Netherlands, too, there are large groups of agricultural workers who cannot find productive employment on the limited arable land available.

Besides farm workers, our experience under the Displaced Persons Act has demonstrated that we can obtain from Europe some trained factory workers, engineers, scientific technicians and other kinds of specially qualified people whose skills can be put to good use in our economy effort.

I am convinced that we should welcome to this country a number of those who now must emigrate from Europe. We should do this, not only in our own self interest, but also as a way to reaffirm the great tradition

of freedom and opportunity which we have proved in our own experience to be the surest path of progress and prosperity.

In considering the steps to be taken, we should measure the needs of the distressed people in Europe against our own needs for manpower, and the extent of our international responsibilities. In all these respects, the problem we face is in the nature of an emergency. This emergency can be of limited duration, if we of the free world act wisely and resolutely. The plight of the refugees in Europe and the demands of our national defense are both related to threat of communist aggression. When that threat wanes, there will be less need for extraordinary measures. But while it persists, we should move promptly and effectively to meet it.

The existing immigration laws are inadequate -- both in general and as regards this special problem. The Displaced Persons Act will end this year, and we will be thrown back on the quota system of immigration. So far as the people escaping from communism are concerned, many of them will be completely blocked from coming to this country because their quotas have been "mortgaged" under the Displaced Persons Act, for many years in the future. For example, half of the Latvian quota has been mortgaged ahead three centuries to the year 2274, the Estonian quota through the year 2146, the Lithuanian quota through the year 2037, and

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the Polish quota through the year 2000.

Furthermore, under present law we will be unable to make any substantial contribution to meeting the problem of overpopulation in Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, or Greece. In the latter countries, for example, where the need is particularly acute, we can admit annually only 5,677 Italians and 310 Greeks under the law as it now stands.

We should temporarily enlarge the numbers of immigrants that can be taken in from all these critical areas. I ask the Congress to authorize the admission of some 300,000 additional persons over a three-year period. This would include, on an annual basis:

(1) 39,000 Germans and persons of German ethnic origin from Eastern Europe who are now in Western Germany;

(2) 7,000 religious and political refugees from communism in Eastern Europe;

(3) 39,000 Italians and persons of Italian ethnic origin from Italy and Trieste;

(4) 7,500 Greek nations from Greece; and

(5) 7,500 Dutch from the Netherlands.

Immigration in these amounts and from these sources could readily be absorbed in this country, and together with a far larger volume of

immigration to other free countries, would go a long way toward solving the emergency problem in Europe.

While this should be a temporary program of limited duration, it can be adjusted to or fitted into whatever permanent changes the Congress may desire to make in improving the present quota system of immigration.

Our present quota system is not only inadequate to meet these emergency needs, it is also an obstacle to an enlightened and satisfactory policy for the long-run future. If our quotas were revised and made more flexible, they could probably be utilized to take care of most or all of the immigration which I am recommending to meet the present emergency situation. These are considerations that the Congress will wish to keep in mind when it takes up the question of improving our existing quota system.

It is most important to remember, however, that action to meet the emergency problem is needed this year. The emergency program should not be deferred because of efforts to improve our whole system of immigration. Neither should it be tied to permanent changes which would hamper or nullify it in its operations.

In addition to this emergency three-year program, I recommend that steps be taken to alleviate an unfortunate situation arising under the operation of the Displaced Persons Act. Although all visas authorized for displaced persons were issued, some 7,500 of them were lost because the persons

to whom they were granted did not actually come to the United States. On the

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other hand, a number of persons who are seeking admission under the Act

and whose applications were under consideration were unable to obtain

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visas prior to the time the authority to issue such visas expired on December 31, 1951. A substantial portion of these applicants were admissible under the standards of the Act, and would have made as good immigrants as those already admitted. The voluntary agencies or individual citizens have given the assurances necessary for the admission of these persons. There is still place for them in the United States. It seems unjust and unwise to deprive them of the opportunity for which they are qualified. Seven thousand five hundred visas should be ample to take care of the displaced persons in this category. I recommend that the Congress authorize up to that number of visas for them.

In carrying out this proposal, and the three-year emergency program as well, we should follow the lessons of the successful experience we have had under the Displaced Persons Act. The same kind of provision should be made, for example, for security safeguards with respect to those admitted to this country, for means to effect their settlement here on a wide geographic basis, and for safeguards against displacement of United States citizens from housing or employment. And similarly, as under the Displaced Persons Act, there should be no religious, racial or other discrimination in the selection of the immigrants.

With respect to the financing of the emergency three-year program, however, the situation is rather different from that under the Displaced

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Persons Act, where transportation was financed through Government funds.

Except for the refugees from communism, the people from the overpopulated areas, who constitute the bulk of the migrants to be admitted, are in a better financial position than the displaced persons of former years. They are not stateless, or dependent wholly on charity. Their countries are interested in seeing them migrate and can be called on to help with the expense of getting them started. The migrants themselves can be asked to repay the cost of their overseas transportation, once they have resettled. Some of them have assets of their own which can be used. While it may be advisable to provide a source of funds to be loaned to these migrants to pay for their passage, the net additional cost to this Government of transporting the people from the overpopulated areas should be small.

The years through which we are passing are tragic years for many people. We are faced with extraordinary problems which demand extraordinary solutions. The problem of the refugees from communist tyranny and that of overpopulation in Western Europe are matters of practical concern to the entire free world. To us in America, whose most basic belief is in the inherent worth of the human individual, these problems present a challenge as well as a responsibility.

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The programs I have here recommended are designed to meet the challenge and accept the responsibility. I hope that the Congress will give them prompt and favorable consideration.

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